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ABSTRACT

In compliance with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and as part of an effort to evaluate staff development and disability education efforts, the colleges in California's San Diego Community College District undertook focus group evaluations of key campus constituents in fall 1996. At the district's Miramar College, focus groups were held with students, disabled and not, administrators, general staff, student services and Disabled Services Program and Services staff, faculty, business office employees, special admissions programs staff, and district site compliance officers. Surveys were sent to potential participants prior to focus group dates to help stimulate discussion, which centered on participant perception of program access, program eligibility, classroom practices and curricula, access to computers and information technology, and employment accommodations, where appropriate. Results from the groups suggested that awareness varied tremendously among college personnel. As expected, those working directly with disabled individuals were more likely to know of available services, accommodations, and barriers than other staff. Participants with little knowledge of ADA tended to focus on concrete issues, such as ramps and interpreters, while those more familiar with the legislation also talked about abstract elements of access. There was general consensus that the college had taken steps to ensure architectural and academic access to programs and services. (BCY)

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ED 413 969

SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

(ADA)

SELF-EVALUATION STUDY

(MIRAMAR COLLEGE FINDINGS)

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San Diego Community College District

Americans with Disabilities Act

Miramar College Self-Evaluation Study

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San Diego Community College District

Americans with Disabilities Act

Miramar College Self-Evaluation Study

Background

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is a comprehensive civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in the areas of employment, public accommodations, state and local government services, transportation and telecommunications. Title II, Subtitle A, became effective on January 26, 1992, and all programs, activities, and services of public institutions are subject to its provisions. Under Title II, a public agency or institution must make its programs, activities, and services accessible and usable for individuals with disabilities. The only exception to these fundamental provisions of usability and accessibility would be if complying with these mandates ...*would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of its programs, activities, or services, or would result in undue financial an administrative burdens.*

As a public educational institution, the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) is subject to the provisions of the ADA and has taken steps since its passage to ensure its implementation. The district has sponsored workshops for staff to learn about the background, goals, and provisions of the ADA and its implications for the institution. In addition to central coordination at the district level through the provision of information workshops, the colleges have also appointed local Site Compliance Officers (SCO's). These officers are responsible for providing support for affirmative action compliance at the colleges and liaison for individuals with complaints to SDCCD staff. They also available to help interpret and ensure compliance at the site level with the provisions of the ADA.

Purpose

The regulations governing the implementation of the ADA are comprehensive with respect to how affected entities are to ensure access, both architectural and programmatic, for individuals with disabilities.

Beyond identifying and remediating architectural barriers, the ADA had other provisions that may be more complex and difficult to measure. For example, the anti-discrimination provisions of the Act are comprehensive and far-reaching. Barriers to full participation in programs and services are viewed in much the same way as are architectural barriers to access. As with architectural barriers, public institutions and agencies are to identify and remove all non-essential barriers or impediments to full participation in programs and services. Section 35.105 of the US Department of Justice's regulation implementing Title II requires all affected institutions to conduct an appraisal or self-evaluation of local compliance with the anti-discrimination features of the Act. For example, one of the intended outcomes of this legislation and the implementing regulations was to raise both awareness of access issues and provide opportunities for equal participation by persons with disabilities. Affected entities are also instructed to take steps to ensure that awareness is demonstrated by staff who potentially work with individuals with disabilities in the college. This need to both inform and evaluate the awareness of ADA compliance led to the focus group interview approach taken here in the SDCCD. Participation in a focus group discussion coupled with the pre-focus group survey and discussion during the group meeting enables both participants to evaluate the level of their own awareness. This approach also allows for evaluators to determine the effectiveness of efforts taken to improve awareness and knowledge of relevant law and approaches to assisting those with disabilities to access programs and services. In meetings held between the Assistant Chancellor for Student Services, the Disabled Student Programs & Services (DSPS) Manager, and the Research Manager, the focus group approach emerged as the most effective means to both educate our staff and evaluate our ADA awareness efforts.

Section 35.105 of the U.S. Department of Justice's regulations implementing Title II requires all public entities to conduct a self-evaluation. The law also states that public entities are liable for any discriminatory policies or practices in effect after January 26, 1992. As a result, *any* discriminatory practices or policies identified by the self-evaluation process should be modified immediately. Until this work was undertaken to identify potential program and non-architectural barriers to full participation in SDCCD programs and services, little systematic effort had been expended to gather this information other than through the complaint process. This effort should be viewed as both complying with federal law, as

preventative work to identify practices or policies that fail to provide equitable access for individuals with disabilities and as an evaluation of awareness effort. This report, while not exhaustive is a significant first step in both compliance, and in evaluating our efforts at education and staff development.

The ADA defines a person as having a disability when they:

1. Have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities,
2. Have a record of a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the individual's major life activities, or mental impairment, or,
3. Are regarded as having such an impairment, whether they have the impairment or not.

The term disability thus covers a wide range of conditions and includes mobility, vision, hearing or speech impairments, learning disabilities, chronic health conditions, emotional illnesses, HIV disease (whether symptomatic or asymptomatic) and a history of drug addiction.

A qualified individual with a disability is someone who meets the eligibility requirements for participation of, and receipt of services in the SDCCD. This person falls under this definition with or without any SDCCD effort to modify any rules, policies, regulations, remove architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or provision of auxiliary aids and services.

Through this self-evaluation, the SDCCD colleges and centers must:

1. Evaluate current services, policies and practices, and identify those that do not meet Title II requirements, and
2. Specify what modifications will be made to identified services, policies or practices that deny or limit participation of individuals with disabilities in their educational programs or activities. Areas that need careful examination include, but are not limited to: general policies and practices, communications, auxiliary aids, eligibility and admission requirements, evacuation from buildings, employment, building and construction policies, and architectural barriers.

Architectural Barriers

Accessibility for individuals with disabilities is often viewed solely as architectural access. The ADA, however goes beyond this concept to require all services, programs, and activities be accessible. An extensive review of architectural barriers to program accessibility in the SDCCD was completed February 1, 1993, for the campus ADA Transition Plan (a copy of the Plan can be found in the SDCCD Business or Facilities Office). The intent of this review was to identify the major physical barriers to program access.

Methodology

Prior to meeting in the focus group activity, individuals selected for participation were sent a survey that covered the intended discussion of the focus group. Respondents were asked to complete the survey prior to attending the focus group. This was done to help focus discussion, and to provide a review or for some respondents, a first look at the terms, issues, and guidelines of the ADA as it applies to educational institutions. It is the function of this survey to cover the programmatic aspects of accessibility. For the sake of brevity, the term "program" will be used in this survey as inclusive of the phrase, "programs, activities, and services."

In the Fall 1996, ten focus groups were identified at each college or center to complete the self-evaluation survey prior to their participation in the focus groups. Individuals selected for participation in the focus group were chosen by the college and continuing education presidents. Participants were asked to complete the self-evaluation surveys and bring the surveys with them to the focus group meeting. Participants were given the opportunity to change, add, or delete any responses during the focus group discussions. These surveys were thus intended to make the focus group discussion more directed and informative.

Respondents were chosen according to their membership or affiliation in a particular group. The ten focus groups were formed comprised of:

1. Students
2. Students with disabilities
3. Academic and Student Services Managers

4. Classified Staff

5. Student Services Staff

6. Disabled Services Program and Services Staff

7. Faculty (including counselors and librarians)

8. College Business Office and Facilities Staff

9. Special Admit Program Representatives

10. Districtwide Group for 504 Site Compliance

Miramar College Findings

STUDENT AND DISABLED STUDENT FOCUS GROUP

Ten students were invited to participate in a focus group; however, only two of the 10 Associated Students members and one disabled student out of 10 identified for participation in the program came to their respective meetings. The following discussion briefly summarizes the findings of the student focus group interviews and combines the information received from both student groupings.

Access to Programs

Students did not appear to be generally aware of how many students with disabilities had identified themselves to a particular program they were involved in. The students did not indicate that they knew of other students with disabilities who had not identified themselves. The students were able to identify some modifications made to policies or programs for individuals with disabilities since January 26, 1992. These modifications included additional parking spaces (4) and a ramp to the Associated Students building for disabled access. However, students were not aware if their particular program provided any auxiliary aids or accommodations to individuals with disabilities.

The students indicated that they were aware of policies and programs that needed modification in order to include individuals with disabilities in a particular program or service. The modifications identified included a van provided by the college to transport disabled Associated Students (AS) students.

Further, students indicated that emergency telephone services were provided by the program, but that direct tty and modem access to emergency services was not available. They recommended that the college obtain tty line access to the college and that the college place more tty phones around the campus.

Students did not know or were unaware if all programs were architecturally accessible and if potential users were informed of this accessibility. However, students did state that campus events were programmatically accessible through the provision of interpreters, captioned video, assistive listening devices, and large print, Braille handouts or programs. The students were aware that they could submit unlawful discrimination complaints based on disability. Students were not aware of any planning or advisory boards on which program participants participate.

Students were able to list some smaller architectural features (those not apt to be found in the Transition Plan) that limited access to their program. They mentioned automatic door openers for access to rooms, widening doors, and improved road surface conditions around the campus and in particular in front of the student building. The students indicated that they were generally unaware of programs and services for disabled students and that most of their fellow students were also generally unaware.

Classroom and Curriculum

Students indicated that tape recorders were allowed in the courses they have taken, that Braille note taking devices were available, and that interpreters were provided for disabled students. Guide dogs were allowed on campus and in classrooms according to the students, and that accommodations are made for students needing modified exams or tests in class. Students were not aware that certain courses could be substituted in the event that students with disabilities could not be accommodated in them. Students indicated that there was a special number available on the telephone registration system for use by deaf students (tty access).

Computers and Information Technology

Students were not aware of any classrooms that were not accessible to disabled students. Adaptive technology was available to students needing it for using computers. Computers for use by disabled students were generally found in the same location as computers for non-disabled students.

The students specifically identified the availability of raised dot indicators on keyboards to assist disabled students in using computers.

The students indicated that the large glass doors in the I building were difficult to open for disabled students and suggested that these heavy doors be retrofitted with an electrical opening device. Students also suggested that greater access to the Internet be provided by the college to students with disabilities. Further, they felt that the computer tables were hard to maneuver around for disabled students.

ADMINISTRATIVE FOCUS GROUP

Eight administrators from Miramar College were invited to participate in a focus group to determine ADA compliance and awareness. Of the eight invitees, five participated in the meeting. The following summarizes their responses to the focus group interview questions.

Access to Programs

Administrators were generally aware of the number of students with disabilities in their particular college or program; however, they were not aware of any disabled students who had not identified themselves as having some sort of disability. The Vice-President of Student Services was aware of several examples of how programs for students with disabilities had expanded. He cited the High-Tech Center for the disabled as an example of how modifications have been made to improve access to educational programs for the disabled. The Business Officer was aware of budgetary allocations to improve the work environment for a staff member with a disability. There was general agreement that the programs at Miramar provided auxiliary aids and accommodations to individuals with disabilities. Among the examples cited were: tutors, mobility aids, special test taking provisions, interpreters, counseling, physical access modifications, computer accommodations and referral to the college DSPS program.

There was a lack of consensus however on the whether there were any policies or practices that need to be modified in order to include individuals with disabilities in Miramar College programs or activities. For example, field trip information needed to provide information on the accessibility for individuals with disabilities. In addition, it was suggested that field trip policies be reviewed to make certain that class field trips are accessible to students with disabilities within budgetary constraints.

This group was also somewhat divided on the issue of how to raise awareness and provide information to program constituents on the provisions of the ADA. Some felt that existing efforts at staff development should be supplemented at staff and department meetings. Others felt that existing information was adequate. They felt that staff was aware of equipment provisions and support services for disabled students.

There was general agreement that tty services were available in the DSPS office for students needing telephone access. In general, emergency telephone services were provided by the program and there is direct tty and modem access provided to the emergency services. Access to information is also facilitated by the availability of public notices, consent forms, announcements and other communications in accessible formats such as large print, Braille, ASCII diskette and tape recordings.

Participants were divided on the question of whether a comprehensive review had been conducted that examined the portrayal of individuals with disabilities in written and audio-visual materials. This review is intended to comply with the ADA Section II-8, 2000 which requires that such a review is needed to ensure that these individuals are not portrayed in an offensive or demeaning manner. Some respondents indicated that this review be conducted using a timely review process of all materials published and used for public display and that faculty need to be informed during staff and department meetings.

There was general consensus that all special programs and social and entertainment events at Miramar were architecturally accessible. One participant noted however, that elevator access in the I-100 and A-200 buildings was not available during power interruptions. Events were made accessible through the provision of interpreters, captioned videos, assistive listening and Braille handouts or programs.

Participants were unable to identify any special program at Miramar College that was only available to full-time students. They cited that accommodations are made to program requirements to enable students with disabilities to participate without necessarily carrying a full load of coursework.

Emergency evacuation procedures for disabled students are available and reviewed periodically by the college DSPS staff. All floor plan maps are accessible and all rooms have evacuation routes posted. This information is also discussed at the Campus Safety Committee meetings.

There was agreement that faculty, staff, students, and the general public were informed that they could file a complaint based on college or district failure to accommodate a disability. They indicated that there were planning and advisory boards on which program participants served and that accommodations have been provided to assist participants with disabilities in serving on these boards.

In reviewing the ADA Transition Plan, it was also noted by a member of this group that the doors in I-100 were too heavy to open for someone with a disability. However, in general there was little awareness of any non-structural measures that could be taken as alternatives to structurally removing a major architectural barrier in a college program. It was suggested that the directional and information signs on campus were inadequate in directing individuals to college services.

Program Eligibility

The majority of participants stated that there were no limits on the proportion of individuals with disabilities able to participate or access college programs. Only one said such limits existed in a particular program. There was no awareness of any pre-admission evaluation or testing for applicants in addition to districtwide assessment and placement testing. The nationally normed tests used for assessment and placement in the district have been validated for use locally. This validation has been corroborated by visiting audit teams and the state chancellor's office. Accommodations are made for students with disabilities to take placement tests when necessary. Information about a student's disability status is only collected voluntarily and all such information is kept confidential according to participants.

Classroom and Curriculum

Participants agreed that when necessary, classes are reassigned or relocated to accessible locations to accommodate students with special needs. They were not aware of any departmental or college time limits for the completion of degree requirements that could not be modified for students with disabilities. They could not cite an example of a disability that effectively prevented a student from participating. This included students with hearing or vision loss or impairment, speaking difficulties, emotional or mental disabilities, learning disabilities or chronic health conditions. There was general agreement that students with visual or learning disabilities were provided with tape recorders in lieu of standard note-taking. Braille note-taking devices are available for students who need them. Interpreters are available for students

who need them. Special accommodations were also available for students taking tests. These accommodations included a reader, special computer, time extensions, and alternate locations.

Substitution of required courses for students with disabilities however was another matter. There was general consensus that there was no substitution of required courses for completion of degree requirements. This is because the courses in question were deemed essential to instruction or required for licensing. All job placements include accommodations for those with disabling conditions with the possible exception of United Airlines. In general, library and learning resource materials are available to all students with disabilities. Computer access to information is facilitated through the High Tech Center for students with disabilities and the library also has adaptive computer technology.

Computers and Information Technology

This part of the focus group and accompanying survey is designed to gather information about computer access to individuals with disabilities. Most were unaware of the input technology available to disabled students such as "sticky key" software, keyguards, trackballs, and other adaptive technologies. However, there was general agreement on the availability of output devices such as large monitors and screen magnification. There was no knowledge of speech synthesizers, Braille printers, or magnifying closed circuit cameras. Most did not know the details of these technologies and generally referred to the DSPS office as the source of information about technology for persons with disabilities. All computing facilities and labs are accessible to students with disabilities. All labs have adaptive technologies, however not all adaptive computers are located in the same room as other computers. Again, there was a general lack of awareness of specific technologies in the labs for students with disabilities. Most suggested that the DSPS office be consulted.

Employment

Participants indicated that training and written material has been provided to staff involved in employment related activities such as recruitment, hiring, interviewing, testing, training and supervising. There was general agreement that additional training sessions on the ADA was not needed in that they had attended several. Departmental staff were familiar with typical forms of reasonable accommodation and notification of such accommodations is given to applicants. Participants responded that job descriptions

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were current and up-to-date and that duty statements identify the essential functions of the job. They reaffirmed that the required skills, knowledge and abilities required for a position were related specifically to the demands of the jobs and the qualifications statements were written so as not to arbitrarily screen out applicants with disabilities. Internal job postings include information pertaining to reasonable accommodation for applicants and postings and notices are made available in alternative format when requested. All job postings are displayed in accessible locations. Testing and interviews are given in accessible locations and accommodations are provided during the interview process when requested. All interview questions are job related and the interviewers know what questions can be asked of applicants with disabilities. In all aspects of employment, whether on the job, staff development, or in the workplace, respondents indicated that accommodations and access are provided to all. They indicated that the staff were aware that the ADA prohibits discrimination against applicants or employees who have a relationship or an association with a person with a disability.

Staff Focus Group

On November 19, 1996, a focus group of staff was conducted at Miramar to obtain their perspectives on compliance with the ADA and to further disseminate information to the staff at Miramar about the provisions of the ADA. Staff from many areas of college operations were represented including admissions, student services, library, veterans affairs, business services, testing and reprographic services.

Access to Programs

The ADA requires that emergency evacuation procedures for individuals with disabilities be reviewed so that access to evacuation in the event of an emergency is assured. The group responded that an Emergency Management Plan Sub-committee had been established. There is also a Safety Committee established to deal with these procedures. There was concern expressed that while a group has been formed to study this issue and make recommendations, a concrete evacuation plan had not yet been established. Some cited that certain doorways needed to be modified for emergency evacuation for persons with disabilities. In some offices the areas are too cramped with desks and furniture for wheelchairs to negotiate with ease. Overall the group felt that plans need to be developed and updated.

Computers and Information Technology

In general the staff group felt that adequate and reasonable accommodations had been made for access to computers and information technology. They also emphasized ergonomic improvements to prevent injuries. Additionally, large high resolution monitors and screen magnification devices had been provided to staff. Alternative documentation formats have been available including tape recorded and large print documentation. When there were doubts, DSPS staff were consulted. Staff indicated that no training was provided to consultants to sensitize them to issues regarding persons with disabilities.

Employment

There was overwhelming agreement that staff were aware of the anti-discrimination provisions of the ADA. Only one person disagreed with this finding on the part of the larger group.

Student Services and DSPS Department Staff

A focus group of student services leaders and staff was convened. Of the seven invitees, four participated in the discussion. Their comments and responses are summarized below.

There was a high general level of awareness about the presence of individuals with disabilities in their particular programs. The group was able to identify in some detail modifications that had been made to increase accessibility for persons with disabilities since January 26, 1992. Among these modifications were a Help Line, tty, individual assistance, training, auxiliary aids, four-track tape recorders, enlarged print, CCTV, sign language interpreters, tutors, note takers, scribes, readers, adaptive computers, wheelchair access to the DSPS office, and test proctors, as well as High-Tech Center for students with disabilities mentioned earlier in this report. The only concern raised was the accessibility of field trips to students with disabilities; transportation to these trips needs to be made more accessible to all students with disabilities.

In the area of communications, not all programs indicated having a tty, but in the DSPS area a tty was available. Some suggested that a tty be made available in the High-Tech Center. Telephone emergency services and provisions to ensure that public notices and other forms are in accessible formats. Those programs that did not, referred individuals to DSPS on the campus. All were in agreement that materials and public information notices are reviewed regularly to ensure a positive portrayal of

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individuals with disabilities. There was some disagreement on the accessibility of all student services programs on the campus. These were noted by other groups earlier in this report. Campus events are programmatically accessible to persons with disabilities through the provision of interpreters, captioned video, assistive listening devices and special format programs. There was a lack of awareness as noted by other groups that students with disabilities could take less than a full load because of their limitations. This was particularly true when evaluation for financial aid was considered. Access to grievance filing procedures is assured, as is participation on planning or advisory boards on the campus. There were some concerns expressed about access and quality of the DSPS office on the Miramar campus. Some felt the office was too small for confidentiality and access to wheelchairs. There were some who argued for a new Student Services building. Many in the group also suggested that this focus group activity designed to measure ADA awareness and compliance was performing a valuable service in raising levels of awareness.

Program Eligibility

The group agreed that limits were not placed on the number of individuals eligible for participation and that no pre-admission evaluation or testing for applicants was required for admission to college programs. Access to the Admissions office was provided and information about a person's disability was provided only on a voluntary basis. When information regarding a disability is collected, the participants maintained that all information is kept confidential.

Classrooms and Curriculum

Registration for students with disabilities is assured through priority registration, individual assistance, and educational planning early on. The Admissions office provides special equipment in addition to Classtalk and individual assistance to students needing aid. Modifications are also made to orientation programs, and services provided by EOPS to make such programs accessible to students with disabilities. Staff often mentioned DSPS as a valuable resource in this regard.

Computers and Information Technology

Both the Student Services and the DSPS staff maintained that access to computer technology was facilitated through the availability of several modifications. Among these were "sticky-key" software, keyguards, trackballs, adaptive computers, ergonomic keyboards, dictation software, screen readers,

scanners, and software to enlarge displays. Access was provided for output devices, input devices and documentation formats. The only concern mentioned were the heavy doors to the computing room.

FACULTY FOCUS GROUP

Of the ten faculty who were invited to participate in a focus group, five participated in the meeting. For the most part, the responses were similar to those of other groups.

Access to Programs

Most indicated that modifications to courses syllabi had been conducted, and that auxiliary aids and accommodations had been provided to individuals with disabilities. These accommodations included tutoring, raised study tables, and individualized assistance with testing. Most cited DSPS as a key resource on the campus in this area. They could not identify any policy or practice that needed to be modified to better include persons with disabilities in their particular program. None of the faculty interviewed had a tty in their program, most relied on DSPS to provide access to this technology. Most indicated that telephone emergency services were not available in their programs to students with disabilities, but that access was available on the campus and through the DSPS office. This group indicated that materials had been reviewed to determine the fair portrayal of persons with disabilities in notices and public information. This group was generally unsure about provisions for taking part-time loads for students requiring modifications in the number of units they are able to take.

Program Eligibility

All of the focus group participants indicated that they do not limit the number or proportion of individuals with disabilities who may participate in a program or activity, nor do they require any pre-admission evaluation or testing for applicants. Participants were unsure as to what admissions personnel do to ensure that students with disabilities are not discouraged from applying to particular programs. Miramar's Admissions office is accessible to all students.

Classroom and Curriculum

Participants agreed that accommodations for students with disabilities sometimes includes substitution of specific courses required for the completion of degree requirements. Others were unsure whether or not this occurs. Students are not required to complete an internship of field placement to fulfill

the requirements of the programs represented by focus group participants. Participants indicated that assistance with registration is available for students with disabilities, however, they were unsure whether modifications have been made to their orientation program to accommodate incoming students with disabilities.

BUSINESS OFFICE FOCUS GROUP

Staff from the business office and operations were also interviewed in a focus group that met on November 20 at Miramar College. Their responses were also similar to the other focus groups. When the responses differ substantially from other focus groups they are presented below.

This group appeared to rely heavily on the DSPS office and staff on the Miramar campus in response to the needs of persons with disabilities. In the majority of their responses, this group stated that the DSPS program and district workshops helped to make them aware of ADA requirements and necessary modifications to increase access to their particular program. This group was generally unaware of whether contractors or on campus clubs or organizations provided reasonable access to persons with disabilities. They were also unaware if assurance had been requested from contractors, agencies or other organizations that they do not discriminate on the basis of disability. When complaints are to be filed, individuals are referred to the Site Compliance Officer (SCO). There was not discrimination against individuals with disabilities with regard to participation on committees, boards, or other bodies on campus. In general, this group felt that adequate access was provided and that there were not any non-structural barriers to full participation to persons with disabilities on the Miramar campus.

SPECIAL ADMIT PROGRAMS FOCUS GROUP

This focus group was comprised of three individuals from two different special admissions programs at Miramar. These individuals were interviewed to determine access and awareness issues for programs that had special requirements for students to participate. Their results, when differ substantially from prior group findings, will be presented below. In the public service law enforcement programs, it was found that most students with disabilities would not be admitted to this program due to physical demands of the occupation for which they are being trained. One of the programs did note that there was at least one student in the program that had a disability. When necessary, auxiliary aids are provided to

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students to assist them in participating. Referral to the DSPS office was a frequent response. None of the respondents were aware of any changes that needed to be made to facilitate participation by students with disabilities.

Staff indicated that their program did not have had a tty, and that most indicated that they referred individuals requiring such services to the admissions office or DSPS office. None of this group were aware if any review had taken place regarding the portrayal of individuals with disabilities. This group did indicate that modifications to full-time attendance had been made, but only for college courses. No modifications to full-time unit requirements had been made for occupational special admissions programs in law enforcement. For program eligibility, some students with disabilities may be limited according to what was referred to as P.O.S.T. standards and requirements. The programs interviewed indicated that there were pre-admissions testing required for participation. There were separate tests for the Police Academy for admittance in addition to a physical ability test. Tests given were the P.O.S.T. and State Fire Marshall exams. Participants were unaware if these tests had been validated for measuring aptitude or achievement. There are pre-admissions criteria applied to applicants for the law enforcement and firefighting programs. Participants are informed of P.O.S.T. requirements but individuals are not intentionally discouraged from applying and taking the extensive mental and physical tests. Participants maintained that no modifications are made in the reassignment of classes or time limits for program completion in the law enforcement or fire programs. The nature of these occupations necessarily exclude students with a variety of disabilities. Again, participants referred often to the P.O.S.T. requirements which seem to severely restrict the participation of individuals with severe mental or physical impairment due to the physical demands of the occupation.

SDCCD SITE COMPLIANCE OFFICERS FOCUS GROUP

The Site Compliance Officers (SCO's) from across the district were interviewed. These individuals are primarily responsible for monitoring local compliance with the ADA on their respective campuses and their particular programs. They coordinate and monitor complaints and investigate discrimination allegations. All SCO's invited attended the focus group meeting. For this section, only comments from the Miramar Site Compliance Officer will be noted and summarized. The Miramar SCO

relies on a variety of methods to ensure awareness of ADA regulations and policies. Among these are FLEX day activities, catalog language, class schedules, Job Fairs and library reference material. The Miramar SCO noted that training and written material on the ADA had been provided to staff involved in employment-related activities. There was general agreement among the group that job announcements, flyers, and information were all in accessible formats and that required skills and knowledge were specifically related to specific job duties. These materials and job demands were also reviewed by compensation and employment staff and consultants. The SCO's generally corroborated the observations of the other focus groups in the areas of employment and access to the campus for persons with disabilities. No limitations were cited to any aspects of employment-related activities for individuals with disabilities which was generally confirmed by the other focus groups as well.

Summary

As a public educational institution, SDCCD is subject to the provisions of the ADA and has taken steps since its passage to ensure its implementation. In accordance with ADA provisions, the district is required to conduct a self-evaluation. The focus group approach was determined to be the most effective means to assess ADA awareness of district personnel.

ADA awareness among Miramar personnel varied tremendously. Some had only a vague notion of what the legislation required, while others had very detailed knowledge of the Act. As might be expected, individuals with disabilities and Miramar personnel who worked directly with individuals with disabilities were the most likely to be aware of services, accommodations, architectural and programmatic barriers, etc. Those with little knowledge of the ADA discussed primarily "concrete" or physical aspects such as ramps, interpreters, and computer hardware, whereas participants with detailed knowledge of the legislation, talked about "abstract" concepts and issues as well (program and non-architectural barriers to full participation in programs and services). Participants said that they often referred questions and issues to the DSPS office.

There was general consensus that Miramar has taken steps to ensure architectural and programmatic access to program and services to individuals with disabilities. Among the examples cited were: Miramar's High-Tech Center; budgetary allocations to improve the work environment for staff with

disabilities; dissemination of information in large print, Braille, and tape recording; and adaptive technologies for computer usage ("sticky key" software, keyguards, trackballs, large monitors).

Focus group participants were unaware of any limitations on the number or proportion of individuals with disabilities who may participate in a program or activity. Other than the districtwide assessment and placement testing, participants were not aware of any pre-admission evaluation or testing for applicants (with the exception of the public service law enforcement programs).

Participants also noted areas that needed to be addressed: fieldtrip transportation for students with disabilities; the need for greater tty and modem access to emergency services; and architectural barriers (door to the "I" building is difficult to open (too heavy), need to widen doors and passage ways in offices).

For a complete review of the focus group responses, the field notes and summaries are located in the Research and Planning Office.